

**MINUTES
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2009**

Commissioners Present: Nicole Murray Ramirez , Bruce M. Abrams, Joyce Abrams, Mary Alcock, Gary Lynn, Gracia Molina de Pick, Teresa Oynos, Carolina Alcoser Ramos, Shonee Henry

Excused: Les Williamson, Mark K. Dillon, Nghiep Le

Absent: Lorraine Johnson, Susan Hawk,

Staff: Ashley Walker, Executive Director (ED); Lori Thacker, Deputy City Attorney

Chair Ramirez called the 205th meeting of the City of San Diego Human Relations Commission (HRC) to order at 5:56 p.m.

- I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION:** ED Walker distributed to the Commissioners and staff: (1) updated HRC Commissioner and Staff Rosters, (2) new Monthly Activity Report forms, and (3) Collaborations, Technical Assistance and Memberships forms. All Commissioners should fill out the Collaborations form and Monthly Activity Reports and return completed forms to ED Walker.

ED Walker introduced HRC's new intern, Carolina Prado.

Roll Call: 9 Commissioners were present, 3 excused, and 2absent.

Minutes – The April 15, 2009 minutes were approved, with the following clerical revisions: (1) date of minutes corrected to “April 15, 2009,” (2) corrected spelling of “Teresa” made, and (3) last name “Rhineman” added to SDUSD representative Bernie.

II. OLD BUSINESS

Harvey Milk Breakfast/Nonfiscal Holiday: Chair Ramirez reported that there has been excellent participation and great interest in the First Annual Harvey Milk Breakfast, to be held May 22, 2009. It is wonderful to have a breakfast honoring Milk, like the MLK and Cesar Chavez breakfasts. The event is sold out.

“Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” Resolution: Chair Ramirez reported that the Resolution passed unanimously at Rules and at Council, and expressed his appreciation to the Council.

III. NEW BUSINESS

Upcoming Trainings and Presentations:

Presentation: The Impact of Indigenous Peoples and Their Culture in San Diego County – Paul Cuero – The speaker was not present because he could not confirm

tonight's presentation. Chair Ramirez asked that a note of apology be sent to Mr. Cuero. The presentation will be rescheduled.

San Diego Unified School District – 3 speakers from SDUSD will present to the Commission in June.

Councilmember Kevin Faulconer – Will be speaking to the Commission on homeless issues, they are still trying to set up the meeting.

Executive Director's Retirement – ED Walker reported that she will be retiring at the end of June. The Mayor signed the request to fill the position, they prepared a job description, it went through the Personnel Department, and is to be posted on Friday. They are planning to start interviews in 2-3 weeks. The interview panel will probably be 2 members from Human Resources, the Chair, ED Walker, and possibly a Commissioner or community person. ED Walker will email to the Commissioners talking points on why it is important to keep the position at its current level.

IV. CHAIR'S REPORT – Chair Ramirez urged the Commissioners to communicate with the Mayor and City Councilmembers to stress the importance and necessity of having an Executive Director for the Commission, and to inform the Councilmembers of the Executive Director's integral role in the Commission's work.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT - ED Walker reported that she saw this fiscal year's budget, which seems solid. The budget provides for allocations for interns, the Executive Director, and non-personnel expenses. ED Walker talked to the head of Human Resources about combining a portion of their 4 different division budgets to hire their own full time receptionist/secretary. The 4 divisions are: Diversity Commitment, HRC, Learning and Development, and Disability Services. They need a receptionist for safety reasons, (to address visitors rather than having the visitors roam around the office) and to perform basic administrative functions..

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Hate and Violence Prevention – Vice Chair Abrams has been forwarding emails directly to the staff and Commissioners regarding Hate and Violence issues. The committee meets monthly, every 3rd Thursday of the month, from 3:00 – 5:00, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Vice Chair Abrams will send emails with information about the next meeting. Cmsr. De Pick and Vice Chair Abrams informed the Commissioners that there are upcoming summits on the issue in the upcoming months. Chair Ramirez requested that Vice Chair Abrams and Cmsr. de Pick keep the Commissioners informed on the dates of the summits and meetings.

ED Walker attended a meeting with Under Sheriff Gore to discuss the alleged hate crime that occurred in Jamul. They wanted him to send a press release, and within 24 hours, he had a press release out on the matter. They are investigating the incident but it appears to be slow-going.

Chair Ramirez proposed that advisory boards be established so that when these types of incidents occur, the Sheriff's Department has an advisory board to help immediately address the issue. Vice Chair Abrams suggested that the advisory board could be called a Diversity or Hate and Violence Prevention committee. Chair Ramirez suggested that this idea be proposed to Gore prior to his appointment, so it will likely that the advisory boards will be implemented soon after winning the election. Vice Chair Abrams, Cmsr. De Pick and ED Walker will come up with a proposal for Gore. Time is of the essence because the Board of Supervisors is meeting next month about the appointment.

- B. Immigration** – ED Walker reported that Cmsr. Dillon has been attending the meetings. The IRC are training the trainers on the Toolkit. Cmsr. Dillon is on a special communications committee, who will hire a communications consultant, who will help to frame the message on immigrant rights. He has been busy with this committee as well as attending the regular meetings. They meet the second Monday of every month at 6:00, at 4305 University Avenue at the Price Charities Boardroom.

Cmsr. Oyos reported that last Friday on the 15th, immigration was the topic at a LGBT event. Cmsr. de Pick commented that there needs to be more sensitivity to immigration issues in East County. There are a large number of Muslim and Iraqi immigrants there. Chair Ramirez suggested that we have a speaker on these issues so the Commission can learn more about these as well as religious issues.

- C. Educational Disparities** – Cmsr. Abrams reported that on June 13, Reality Changers will hold their Scholarship Banquet. The charge is minimal. If you are interested in attending, let ED Walker know and she will inform Chair Ramirez, who can get a table. Cmsr. Lynn has info on the event that he will send to ED Walker. If any other Commissioner has info, please send to ED Walker.

Chair Ramirez suggested they have one meeting to thank speakers for their contributions. Cmsr. Abrams stated that a certificate was presented to Mr. Yanov of Reality Changers. The certificate was presented with some of the students present; the students were very proud of Mr. Yanov and he was very appreciative of the HRC's recognition.

Cmsr. Abrams met with a trainer on No-Bullying in the Workplace, Catherine Maddox. She has her card, and can ask her to speak to the Commission.

Cmsr. Abrams reported that 3 speakers from SDUSD will be speaking to the Commission next month, on June 17, from 6-6:30. Chair Ramirez asked if they could speak about bullying in the schools and what they do about it.

Cmsr. Abrams volunteered to be on the interview panel for the Executive Director position, if they ask a Commissioner to be on the panel.

Cmsr. Abrams reported that the state of SD schools is not looking good at the moment. Many will be resigning from SDUSD. Teachers are not teaching art and music classes.

Cmsr. de Pick commented that because the Propositions failed, summer and special programs will be cut, and students added to classrooms. Cmsr. Abrams stated that class size will probably increase, and furlough days are possible.

ED Walker reported that on SDUSD's agenda June 9 is a resolution beginning the process of having the district analyze programs/trainers/teachers needed to make all students career or college ready, and certification of career tech classes. De Beck sent to issue to a staff committee which has slowed the process. They have been doing rallies, helped draft resolution. It has since been sent to a committee for further negotiation and she is not sure if it has enough votes.

D. Criminal Justice System Disparities Committee – None

E. Legislative Update - None

VII. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Chair Ramirez - Reported that he attended the funeral for the wife of Rev. George Walker-Smith, there was a great turnout of people. Chair Ramirez was arrested for protesting against the new restaurateur in Old Town, who terminated numerous Latino employees and doesn't want to pay adequate wages/unions. Also present with Chair Ramirez was Congressman Filner. Chair Ramirez did not represent himself as Chair of the HRC during the protest; however he was still named as the Chair in media coverage of the protest.

Cmsr. de Pick - Reported that she will be doing a commencement speech for students at SDSU and UCSD. Her book was also recently published, which discusses the participation of women in Mexican history.

Cmsr. Ramos - Reported that she participated in a training of correctional officers in the Las Colinas jail. She did sensitivity training on transgender inmates. Under Sheriff Gore and Captain Miller addressed the issue immediately, and sent a notice out to all correction officers that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect. Cmsr. Ramos has also been involved in volunteer food distribution in the Gay and Lesbian Center parking lot. Food is distributed the first Tuesday of the month. They give out approximately 2000 bags, no questions are asked. They also have been signing people up for food stamps.

Cmsr. Alcock – Vice Chair Abrams distributed information on 211 San Diego. Cmsr. Alcock provided information on 211 (one of her clients), an informational/referral service for the community.

Cmsr. Henry – Reported that she has been involved with Project Homeowner, a statewide initiative to help homeowners stay in their homes. They counsel distressed homeowners, provide free counseling, and may modify loans on the spot. 279 families came to the San Diego event, and 900 to the Los Angeles event. They were not well attended by the Asian community. They are planning to have one geared to the Asian community in late August or early September. She would like to use the HRC logo as part of the collaboration.

A motion was made by Cmsr. Henry, seconded by Cmsr. de Pick, to endorse Project Homeowner. All were in approval.

Cmsr. Oyos – Reported that she attended the 39th Annual Chicano Park Day Celebration on April 25. It was a wonderful event, honoring Latino women in history. Cmsr. Oyos thanked those who supported her May 1 birthday fundraiser for the Tijuana Aids Fund. She also attended a breakfast at the center where immigration issues were discussed, and the Women's Fest on women's health issues, which was well attended.

Cmsr. Abrams – Reported that South Bay Community Services will hold the Change Their Lives Extravaganza, to be held on October 10 at the Ivy. The event benefits victims of domestic violence. Cmsr. Abrams also reported that he went to a luncheon on behalf of Hadassah, a hospital in Israel. Cmsr. Abrams was recognized for the work he did for them this past year. They have a fund and are looking for a diverse group of individuals who are politicians/policymakers/public opinion leaders to take trips to Hadassah sites in Israel.

Cmsr. Lynn – Thanked Vice Chair Abrams for forwarding the informative emails on hate crime and violence. He attended a meeting of the La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club on May 6. James McIlroy spoke about increase in hate crimes in California. California has the largest number of hate organizations in the United States (4 in SD and 1 in Lakeside) and their memberships are growing. Mr. McIlroy would be willing to speak to the Commission. Cmsr. Lynn also attended the board meeting of the Casa Cornelia Law Center and got an update on immigration/asylum/unaccompanied children cases. Casa Cornelia provides pro bono legal services to victims of civil rights violations within the indigent immigrant community. They provide assistance on issues such as asylum, domestic violence and detained unaccompanied children. Cmsr. Lynn suggested the Commission have someone from Center come and speak to the Commission.

VIII. MEETING ADJOURNED: The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Prepared by Lori Thacker, Deputy City Attorney
Approved by Ashley Walker, Executive Director